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Weekly Summary
Special Report

The Warsaw Pact: An Alliance of Unequals

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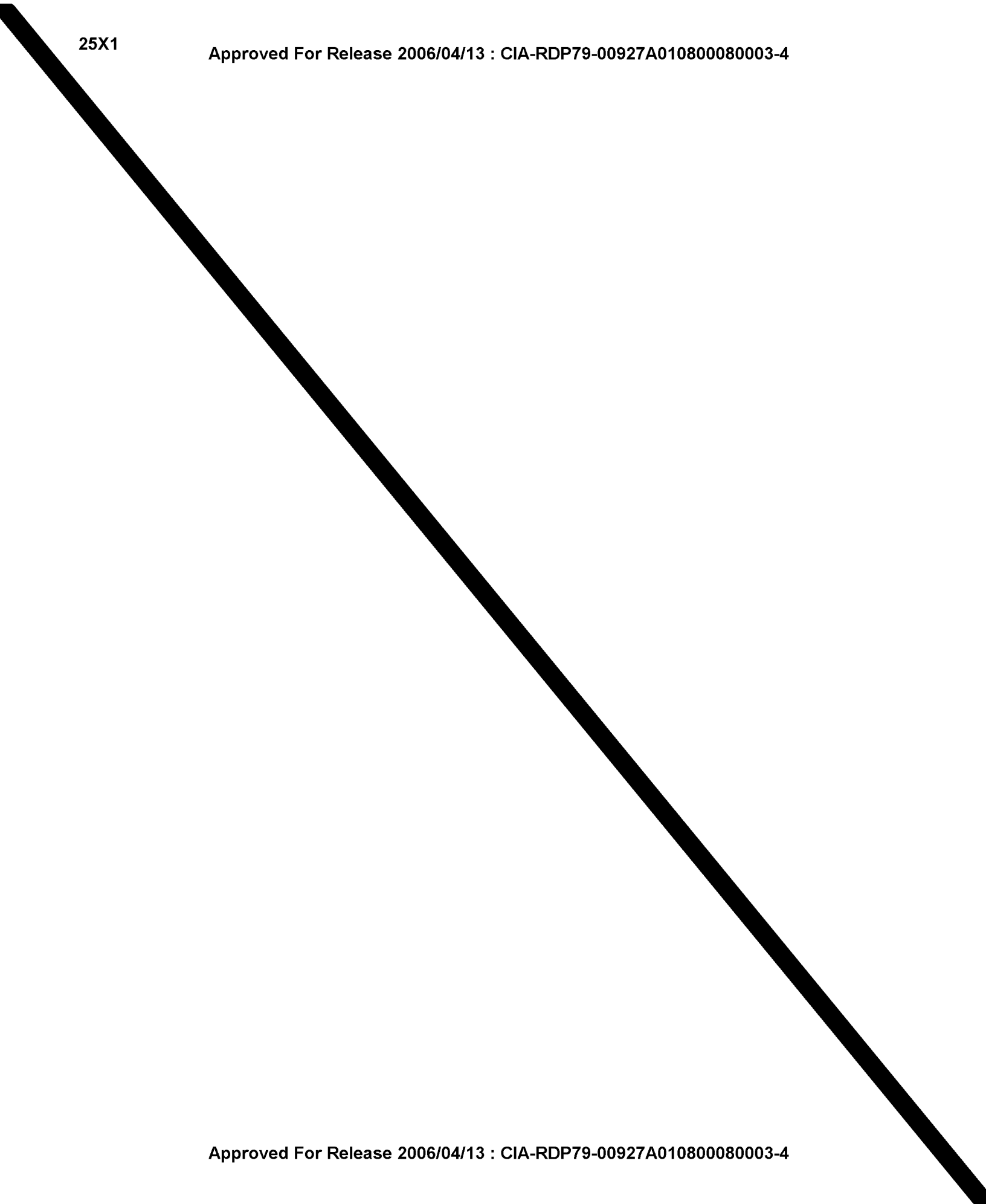

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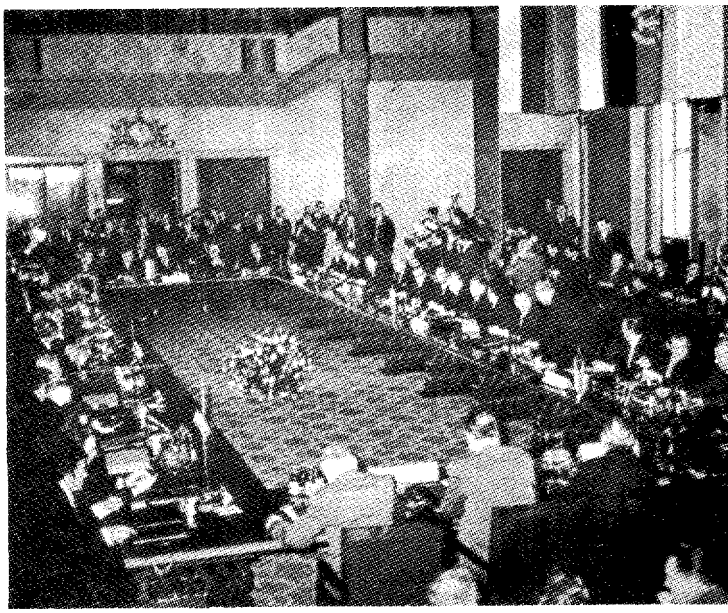
THE WARSAW PACT



An Alliance Of Unequals

The Warsaw Pact is a political and military alliance of the USSR and its East European neighbors. Created 19 years ago when West Germany entered NATO, the armed forces of the pact members have evolved into a large, well-equipped combat force. It is dominated by the USSR, both in terms of its first-line units and its command structure. It has, however, developed councils, staffs, and commands on which all members are represented in an organizational structure superficially similar to NATO's.

From Moscow's viewpoint, the pact's value as a mechanism of control over its allies is probably as important as its value as a military counterweight to NATO. Although formal pact political consultations have not submerged all differences among the members, they have, by and large, ended by endorsing Soviet policies. Joint exercises, common equipment, and integrated command have reinforced the sense of interdependence.

On June 4, the membership of all parties to the Warsaw Treaty will be automatically extended until 1985, unless they formally announce their intent to leave the pact before the June date. In addition, the text of the treaty provides for its own abolition should a "system of collective European security" come into being. Given the pact's continuing political and military usefulness as a multilateral institution, it is a foregone conclusion that it will be neither dissolved nor renounced by any of its members.

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Political Consultation

As a political alliance, the Warsaw Pact* provides a facade of institutional respectability to Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe and is used to give the appearance of a unity of purpose that does not always exist. Moscow has found it to be valuable as a coordinating and consultative mechanism.

Soviet foreign policy views have received formal, multilateral endorsement from the pact's political consultative organs. Aside from the propaganda value, these documented endorsements provide the necessary periodic reassurances of East European loyalty and also help Moscow spot any budding differences. They also are a record of commitment that Moscow can later use to pull recalcitrants into line. Additionally, the Soviets can use the group pressure of a joint meeting to gain tactical and strategic advantages in hammering out agreed positions. Nonetheless, such multilateral political consultations apparently have not always been the boon that Moscow may have originally thought.

Despite the top-level Political Consultative Committee's decision in 1956 to convene semiannually, it has met only 14 times in the 19 years of its existence; only in 1970 did it meet twice. Similarly, meetings of the pact's foreign ministers have been convened only seven times since 1966. The formal nature of the sessions and the apparent requirement of unanimity have probably contributed to this infrequency. As a sort of supplement, the Soviets have convened informal meetings of the pact leaders in the Crimea each summer since 1971.

The Warsaw Pact is not and never will be an alliance of equals or near equals, nor is it the rubberstamp organization that it was in its early years. There is now a little more give and take, which poses some liabilities for Moscow, and consequent advantages for the East Europeans. The Romanians, in particular, and probably others at different junctures, have successfully exploited the multilateral forum to bring about some modifications in Soviet policy.

MEETINGS OF THE POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE	PLACE
January 27-28, 1956	Prague
May 24, 1958	Moscow
February 4, 1960	Moscow
March 28-29, 1961	Moscow
June 7, 1962	Moscow
July 26, 1963	Moscow
January 19-20, 1965	Warsaw
July 4-6, 1966	Bucharest
March 6-7, 1968	Sofia
March 17, 1969	Budapest
August 20, 1970	Moscow
December 2, 1970	East Berlin
January 25-26, 1972	Prague
April 17-18, 1974	Warsaw
* May 1975	Warsaw

**Scheduled jubilee session to mark the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Treaty.*

Peacetime Military Cooperation

The Warsaw Pact has been the paramount institutional forum for the extensive peacetime military coordination that Moscow has cultivated since 1961. Indeed, the Warsaw Treaty appears to be the only legal basis for such coordination. Article 5 established the pact's Joint Command

**The members of the Warsaw Pact are the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Albania originally was a member of the alliance, but ceased active participation in 1961 in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split. It formally renounced membership in September 1968, to protest the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Warsaw Treaty was signed on May 14, 1955, but did not enter into force until June 4, 1955, when Albania deposited its instruments of ratification.*

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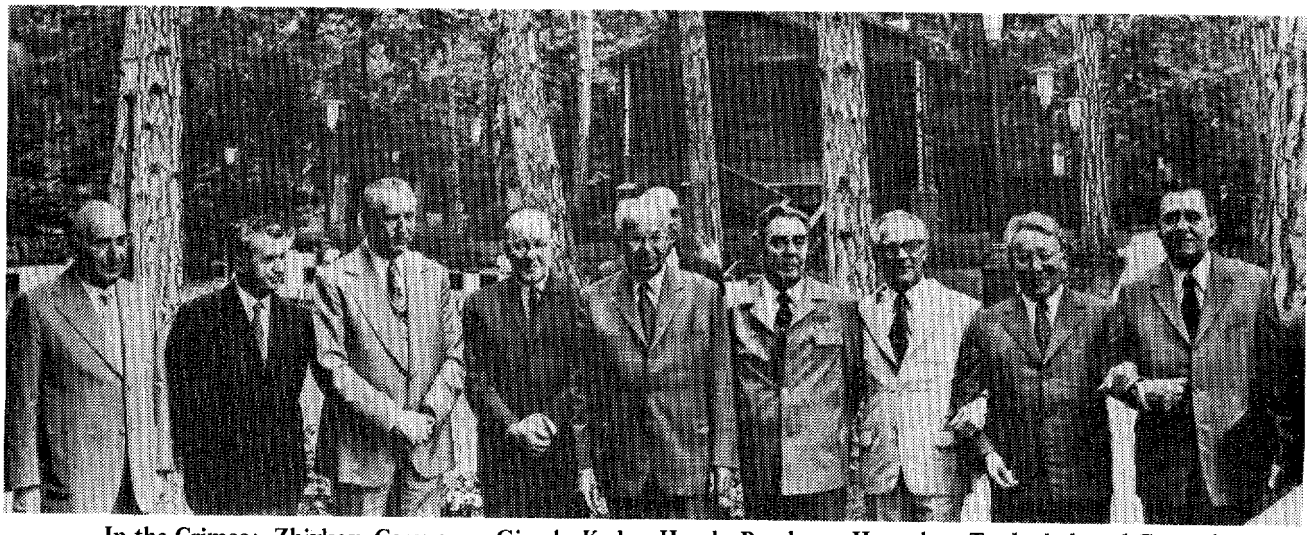

In the Crimea: Zhivkov, Ceausescu, Gierek, Kadar, Husak, Brezhnev, Honecker, Tsedenbal, and Gromyko

and further permits the adoption of other agreed defensive measures against "possible aggression." None of the bilateral friendship and mutual assistance treaties between Moscow and its allies provides explicitly for such peacetime military cooperation, despite the commitment to mutual defense in case of an armed attack. All such accords, except the one with Romania, do bind the parties to cooperation in "all spheres." This wording presumably could be taken to include military cooperation.

Characteristically, only Romania is apparently not obligated to peacetime military cooperation should the pact be dissolved. The Romanian-Soviet friendship treaty avoids the general language of the other treaties and, instead, delineates cooperation in the "political, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural spheres." Military cooperation is conspicuously absent. Such legalisms are neither irrelevant nor happenstance. They are a key to Romanian obstructionism within the pact.

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Extensive peacetime military collaboration benefits Moscow by enhancing the usefulness of East European military forces, and by spreading out some of the economic burdens of the pact, whether directly or indirectly. For instance, even if much of the Czechoslovak military has not been trusted since 1968, Prague's production of military hardware has been of great value.

Moreover, much of the political value of peacetime military coordination lies in the means it provides for monitoring and controlling nationalism in Eastern Europe. Through coordination Moscow can keep close tabs on the individual East European military establishments. The mere act of planning and practicing for wartime contingencies has introduced standardizations of doctrine, organization, equipment, and language along Soviet lines.

Such coordination has been useful to Moscow in its dealings with the recalcitrant Romanians. The process has been used in an effort to keep Bucharest on the political defensive, to nibble away at its concept of national sovereignty, and to provide a potential channel for subversion.

[redacted]

In the give and take of Soviet - East European relations, "defense preparedness" is evidently a potent issue that the Soviets can use to good effect in extracting concessions from their allies. Persistent Soviet demands for greater East

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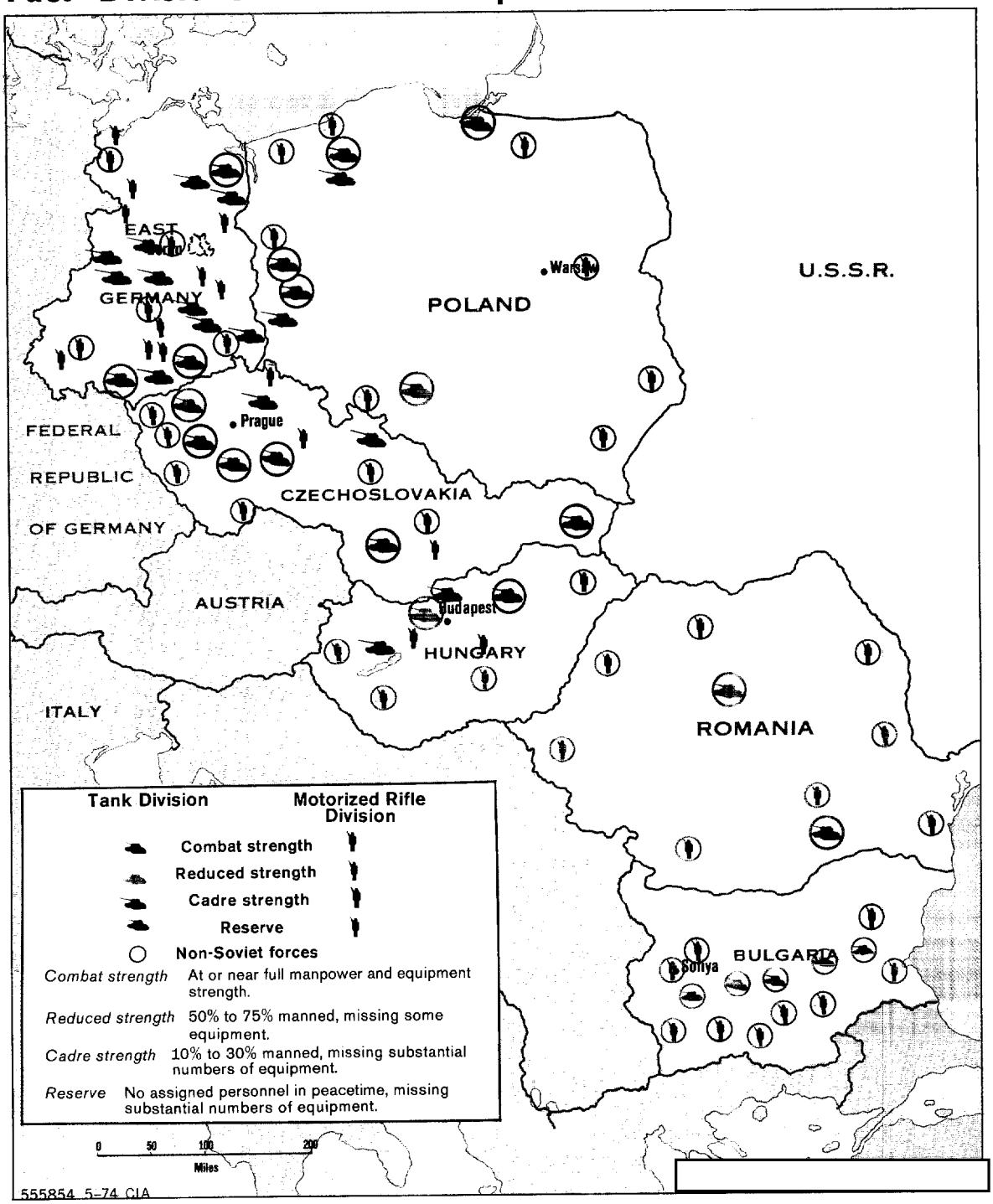
Peacetime Strengths of Warsaw Pact Divisions in Eastern Europe



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European investment in Soviet economic schemes are more difficult to ignore if Moscow links them to the demands of joint "defense preparedness."

The Soviets did not initially consider the Warsaw Pact useful for peacetime military collaboration, even though a separate annex to the 1955 treaty called for an extensive joint military command. In fact, the Soviet Defense Ministry did not implement the provisions of this annex until the early 1960s, when economic exigencies and the break with China made Moscow interested in increasing East Europe's military capabilities. The pact leaders, meeting in Moscow in March 1961, agreed on new measures for "further strengthening their defensive capabilities." The results of this decision became apparent in October 1961, when the first joint Warsaw Pact exercise was staged in East Germany. A year later, Romania hosted joint maneuvers on its soil, the first and only time it has done so. At the same time, Moscow undertook an effort to modernize East European forces.

The pact's command structure, however, apparently continued to be little more than a section of the Soviet Defense Ministry. Complaints by Romania in the mid-1960s that the alliance lacked the "international" features amply promised in the Warsaw treaty prompted an effort to broaden participation. Moscow in effect agreed to a greater East European voice in pact military organs, in order to remove the Romanian excuse for its failure to cooperate fully.

The Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in 1969 approved "new regulations" and "documents" to "further perfect" the pact's military organs. From this came several new organs—the Committee of Defense Ministers, Military Council—and the first assignment of East Europeans to the pact's military staff. Whether the East Europeans have a stronger voice is still not certain, however, inasmuch as the Soviets have not conceded any key positions.

Military Posture

During the 19 years that the Warsaw Pact has been in existence, the pact countries' military forces have improved overall. Despite some presumed political differences and different degrees of reliability, these national armed forces have in recent years become interdependent components of a combat entity.

The East Europeans are bound by a general commonality of equipment, doctrine, and practice that conform to the Soviet model. With the exception of a few items of equipment that are indigenously designed and produced, virtually all East European ground and air armaments are provided by Moscow or produced locally under Soviet license. This is still generally true for Romania, despite efforts by Bucharest in recent years to diversify its equipment.

In any conflict with NATO, the East European forces would almost certainly act in concert with the Soviet Union. They could scarcely do otherwise. Nuclear weapons are a case in point. All the East European forces have tactical missiles with nuclear capabilities, and most have aircraft suitable for delivering tactical nuclear weapons. None, however, control the nuclear warheads, and none could employ them except at Soviet discretion.

During peacetime, the pact countries maintain the structure and major elements of the entire ground forces intended for war. Those forces kept at full strength—mainly the Soviet units stationed in Eastern Europe—provide the capability to counter a NATO attack or possibly to initiate combat operations while understrength forces are being mobilized.

Most pact units, however, are manned and equipped at less than full combat strength, largely to avoid the economic strains of a large standing army. This skeletal force ensures a ready framework for the rapid expansion of ground forces, and is used to train the large number of men called up under universal conscription and then assigned to the reserves. While the standing strength of pact ground forces varies, almost all are believed to have at least a cadre of personnel and their complement of combat equipment, except for armored personnel carriers.

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POLITICAL ORGANS

• **Political Consultative Committee** (PCC), designating the formal top-level meetings of the political leaders of the pact member states. Its jurisdiction covers the broad range of political, military, economic, and cultural affairs. Judging by differences in attendance at the PCC sessions, national representation on the PCC may vary from state to state. Hungary consistently sends the smallest delegation—usually the party leader, government head, and foreign minister. Defense ministers apparently have not attended PCC sessions since 1969.

• **Foreign Ministers.** Meetings of foreign ministers have no formal title analogous to the PCC. They have met irregularly since 1959, often, but not always, in apparent advance preparation for the PCC meetings.

• **Deputy Foreign Ministers,** who have met infrequently.

• **Secretary General of the Political Consultative Committee,** presently Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin, appears to perform administrative tasks for the PCC.

THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

• **Committee of Defense Ministers,** formed in 1969 in line with decisions taken at the Budapest summit. It has convened annually, usually to discuss the activities of the pact's military organs and the military posture of the member states. The committee's 1971 session apparently focused on modernization efforts for the next five years.

• **Joint Command,** has always been headed by a Soviet, currently Soviet Deputy Defense Minister Marshal Ivan Yakubovsky, who has the title Commander in Chief of the Joint Armed Forces. The command functions through a staff, maintains Soviet representatives in each capital, and has jurisdiction over the Joint Armed Forces. There are at least seven deputy commanders, who command their country's units "assigned" to the Joint Armed Forces.

• **Staff of the Joint Armed Forces,** consisting of permanently assigned representatives from each country's General Staff and located in Moscow. Reports suggest that another pact staff facility is being built at Lvov. Soviet General Sergei Shtemenko is Chief of Staff, and every pact member is thought to have assigned someone to the staff. A convention on the privileges and immunities of the staff was completed in 1973.

• **Joint Armed Forces,** are composed of specifically "assigned" units from the "allied armies" of the member states. All East German armed forces were so assigned in January 1956, and presumably retain that status. It is not known what other units—specifically from the East European countries—have been designated part of the joint forces, or what the conditions and modalities of assignment are. The joint command may exercise control prerogatives only during wartime.

• **Military Council of the Joint Armed Forces,** formed in 1969, consists of a deputy defense member from each member state. They hold the rank of Warsaw Pact deputy commanders in chief and as such, "command" their own national units assigned to the Joint Armed Forces. The council is chaired by the commander of the Joint Armed Forces and meets semi-annually to plan training schedules for the joint forces and examine topical military subjects. Council sessions appear to focus largely on the activities of the Joint Armed Forces; concurrent gatherings of "leading cadres" discuss the apparently broader subject of the "allied armies."

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Further Grooming

Moscow seems intent on further grooming the Warsaw Pact for greater political and military coordination.

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Over the long run, the Soviets may be interested in creating within the pact a standing, integrated military force, subject to pact (read, Soviet) command that might be used for maintaining internal security within Eastern Europe. Clearly, the Warsaw Pact *per se* has not been the asset during bloc crises—whether in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968—that the Soviets want it to be. Nonetheless, such military coordination measures, practiced since 1961, were probably useful during the Czechoslovak operation. In September, 1965, Brezhnev alluded to the need for establishing within the Warsaw Pact "a permanent and operative mechanism for considering urgent problems." There were rumors in 1970 that Moscow had actively proposed the creation of a multilateral "police force," but nothing appears to have come of it. In fact, the Soviets will probably make little headway on this issue, given the certain opposition (probably not only from the Romanians) to pact (Soviet) control of national forces without the concurrence of the national political leadership.

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Possible Treaty Revisions

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Although organizational changes could be made without any revisions of the original Warsaw Treaty, there is some reason to think the Soviets might want to revise it. The treaty's preamble contains historical references that—in light of current European detente developments—provide an anachronistic rationale for the treaty's existence. The Soviets undoubtedly would prefer a simpler introductory statement of principles and objectives, similar to those of the North Atlantic Treaty. They might well hope to include the mutual obligation to preserve socialism that has been called the "Brezhnev doctrine."

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Moscow might also want to remove the references in the treaty that restrict its applicability to Europe. In so doing, the Kremlin would seek to commit the East Europeans to the Soviet side in any clash with China. The Soviets have some useful precedents; they successfully widened the geographical perspective of bilateral friendship treaties they renewed with four of the East European countries (including Romania) in the late 1960s. (The treaty with Bucharest contains some qualifying language obviously intended by the Romanians to dilute the anti-Chinese implications.) Aside from the Warsaw Pact itself, only the Soviet bilateral friendship treaties with Poland and East Germany are still restricted to a European context.

While the East Europeans might conceivably, albeit reluctantly, concede the geographical issue (with appropriate qualifying language), the issue of the Brezhnev doctrine would arouse strong resistance, at least from the Romanians. Bucharest evidently is prepared to offer counter-revisions—undoubtedly changes in Article 5, on peacetime military cooperation—should Moscow raise the issue.

Abolition or Renunciation

There is a possibility, though highly remote, that the pact will be dissolved or that individual members will withdraw. Article 11 of the Warsaw Treaty provides for the pact's dissolution "should a system of collective security be established in Europe." The Soviets have never spelled out what this would entail, but they clearly have in mind more than a successful conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

From the time of its first European security proposal at the Geneva summit in 1956, Moscow has held that one prerequisite would be the simultaneous dissolution of NATO. Soviet Premier Bulganin then hedged even this position by listing such additional conditions as an agreement on armaments reduction and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe. The pact summit last month described a successful CSCE as the starting point for a European security system and implied that the dissolution of NATO and the implementation of effective disarmament measures were still prerequisites.

If the pact were dissolved, a separate network of bilateral friendship and mutual assistance accords between Moscow and each of its East European allies exists to bind the parties to political, economic, and other areas of cooperation. A military cooperation clause comes into effect in the event of an armed attack on either party. In addition, dissolution of the pact would not affect the bilateral status-of-forces agreements, which legitimize the presence of Soviet troops in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The Four Power Potsdam Agreement, signed at the end of World War II, additionally authorizes the presence of Soviet forces in Poland to protect the lines of communication to Soviet troops in East Germany.

Renunciation of the pact by any of its present members is quite unlikely, although any of them may legally do so until June 4 when the pact will be automatically renewed until 1985. Even the recalcitrant Romanians will not want to challenge Moscow that directly.

Conclusion

Whatever its flaws, the Warsaw Pact is effective as an instrument of Soviet political/military control over Eastern Europe. It is, therefore, almost certain to remain a feature of the European scene for some time. It may even become more important to Moscow in an era of detente, when it will be necessary to prop up any flagging East European commitments and military preparedness, including defense spending. This will be true for such countries as Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria that have a secondary role in Soviet military strategy, as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia, which have key roles.

Modernization of Warsaw Pact units will, of course, continue and, at least in terms of the equipment they have available, they will become

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a more effective fighting force. The political mission of the pact, however, will remain crucial. As West Germany makes its peace with the East, and European security and force reduction talks progress, the specter of a revanchist West Germany will no longer seem as ominous. Instead, the Soviets must deal with client states that are most concerned with increased demands from consumers, strong inflationary pressures, and sluggish progress toward industrial modernization. The Polish riots of December 1970 may have more relevancy for the future of the Warsaw Pact than the threat from NATO.

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